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Achieving Academic Excellence: A Case Study of Head's Leadership Style in a High-Performing Girls' High School in District Lahore

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Abstract



The current study constitutes an exclusive case study focused on a high-performing public sector girls' high school located in district Lahore. The primary objective is to highlight the factors influencing school performance, with a specific emphasis on the contribution of school leaders in utilizing both human and material capital to enhance overall school performance. As a case study involves a comprehensive analysis of a phenomenon, all available written, practiced, and perceived ideas and actions were documented to assess the school's performance. To achieve this, various methodologies were employed. A thorough document analysis of school records, including results, history, and logbooks, provided general information about the school. A checklist was systematically utilized to assess provisions and commodities within the school premises, encompassing infrastructure, furniture, equipment, and services offered. A researcher-developed scenario-based inventory was used to identify the leadership style of the school leader. Additionally, a school culture questionnaire aided in determining the prevailing school culture and environment. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with school staff and teachers to gather firsthand information about school leadership and performance. The findings of the case study revealed that the leader of this high-performing school exhibited a democratic leadership style, as evidenced by outstanding school results and a well-maintained school logbook. Most of the school facilities met the 75% criteria for optimal service provision, highlighting a commitment to excellence within limited budget and resources. The school culture questionnaire indicated a predominantly democratic and collegial culture in various practices. Overall, the school staff and students expressed satisfaction with their roles within the school, attributing their professional contributions to the acknowledgment and respect received from the school leader.

Keywords: High performing School, Head's Leadership style, School facilities, School Culture

Introduction

School leadership is the capability to facilitate the achievement of common goals of the institute through motivation, guidance, and support of school personnel. Various leadership styles are employed to inspire school staff to strive for academic excellence, foster collegial relationships, and ensure the continuous development of teachers' professional skills. The performance of teachers is closely linked to the vision of school leaders, their leadership practices, and the strength of their relationships with both staff and students within the school (Batool, Jabeen, & Ali, 2023).

Effective leadership involves coordination and collaboration with higher authorities, school personnel, and community representatives to foster the healthy growth of students and developing them as responsible and competent citizens of the community (Rubin, 2009).

Within the spectrum of leadership styles, ranging from autocratic to transformative, research consistently highlights the prevalence of the democratic style in public schools. This participatory approach has been widely acknowledged as conducive to the overall success of educational institutions (Abowitz, Kathleen & Thompson, 2013; Feu Gelis, Falguera & Abril, 2023).

In contrast, autocratic leadership is deemed the least acceptable and has been reported as the most unfavourable in terms of providing opportunities for staff growth and development. As such,

fostering a democratic leadership style emerges as a key factor in creating a positive and thriving educational environment (Batoool et al., 2023).

The collective strength of school leaders, comprising principals, head teachers, and teachers, plays a pivotal role in cultivating an environment conducive to optimal school performance. Working together they engage in the collaborative design and development of the school culture, management of resources, promotion of relationships, and formulation of policies. This interrelated and cumulative effort serves as a driving force for the ongoing process of school improvement (Wiyono et al., 2023).

Numerous case studies highlight the importance of involving all school personnel in pursuit of a shared goal. These studies identify four major features crucial to improvement: a commitment to ongoing enhancement, the implementation of effective problem-solving practices and monitoring mechanisms, the equitable distribution of responsibilities, and the active support and development of middle leaders who serve as both coordinators and teachers (Wang, Gurr & Drysdale, 2016; Wang, 2018; Day, Sammons & Gorgen, 2020).

Considering the studies discussed above, the analysis of school improvement can be structured around five key elements. These encompass the activities undertaken within the school for its enhancement, the involvement of all school stakeholders, the management and practices implemented for improvement, the commitment and engagement of school personnel in improvement strategies, and, ultimately, the realization of objectives in terms of consequences and a cumulative sense of achievement.

School Facilities for School Improvement

The facilities provided at the school such as infrastructure, school services, school environment and school culture also act as catalysts for school improvement. This involves strategically improving learning conditions and related factors to achieve educational goals more effectively. It involves careful planning for use of resources, system generation for day to day activities, documentation, effective communication, developing relationship with students and teachers and then celebrating achievements and targets (Maqbool et al., 2023).

Conducive School Culture

The idea of school culture, especially since the 1980s, is used to describe the overall character of how things work in schools. It comes from how people inside the school, like students and teachers, interact with each other and with the outside world, like parents and the local community. This interaction creates a culture of learning. The way people see and think about things, as well as their beliefs and values, influence how everyone in the school community behaves (Cardona, Valencia & Hernández, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Studying the case of a well-performing school offers valuable insights into the critical role of leadership in fostering academic excellence, particularly when considering the facilities provided, the school's culture, and teachers' perceptions. A well-performing school is not merely a product of chance but often a testament to effective leadership. Leadership plays a pivotal role in securing and optimizing these resources, ensuring they align with educational objectives. Moreover, the school's culture, shaped by leadership, sets the tone for collaboration, motivation, and shared commitment to academic success. Understanding teachers' perceptions within this context reveals the impact of leadership strategies on instructional practices, professional development, and overall job satisfaction. By exploring the specifics of a successful school case study, educators and administrators gain actionable insights into the multifaceted influence of leadership on academic excellence, providing a roadmap for other institutions aspiring to achieve similar success.

Objective of the Study:

1. To explore the holistic effect of head teacher's leadership style on the institutional performance.

Research Questions:

1. What is the school performance as per the documented record?
2. What is the heads' leadership style as per Leadership inventory?
3. How many facilities are there in the school related to building, water, furniture and services?
4. What type of school culture is there as per School Culture Questionnaire?
5. What are teachers' perceptions regarding Heads' performance?

Methodology of the Research

The current research is a case study that focuses on highlighting how leadership influences a school's performance. The investigation involves identifying the impact of school leadership style, school culture, and school facilities on the performance of both teachers and students. As a typical case study, the research utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools to comprehensively analyse the factors contributing to a school's success (Hancock, Algozzine & Lim, 2021). The chosen school for the case study was purposively selected from the top-performing public schools in the city based on benchmarks set by the District Education Office in Lahore.

Population of the Study

The study included the head teacher, teaching staff, supporting staff, and students as the population. The examination of school infrastructure and facilities such as water, sanitation, laboratories, and the library was conducted. Additionally, school records, logbooks, result registers, attendance registers, and budget registers were analysed to gather necessary information. The school had a total of 44 teachers, with ages ranging from 25 to 56 years and experiences ranging from 3 to 26 years. The supporting staff comprised seven individuals, including three females and four males. The school had a total student population of 1240, covering grades from pre-nursery to matric (10th Class) in a Girls' high school in the central area of Lahore.

Sample of the Study

The Head teacher completed the School Leadership Questionnaire, while all 36-teaching staff participated in the School Culture questionnaire. Seven teachers were purposively interviewed, including both senior and junior staff, as well as those in key positions such as block in-charges, to gather their perspectives on school leadership and their performance. The observation of school infrastructure, including the building and furniture, and all facilities and services, were conducted using a checklist.

Instrumentation

In a holistic approach to the case study, researchers initially analysed school records, including logbooks, previous five-year results, teachers' and students' attendance registers, scheme of studies, and other relevant documents. A checklist named 'School Plant Checklist' with five points was created by the researchers to assess school's infrastructure, facilities, and services. Thirty six out of 44 teachers were administered a School Culture Questionnaire conveniently (Akbar, Khanam, Aslam, Fatima & Muhammad, 2017). Whereas face-to-face interviews were conducted with 7 purposively selected teachers from the school. All researchers' made instruments were validated with strict compliance of Psychometric standards. Their face validity, content and construct validity were established with the help of experts' opinion.

Data Analysis

The research presented a summary of the documents, highlighting significant information about school performance, including academic results, attendance, co-curricular activities, and remarks from school higher authorities. The headmistress's leadership style was determined using the Leadership Inventory through calculation of mode. The checklist analysis resulted in a cumulative score assigned to school infrastructure, facilities, and services. The School Culture Questionnaire was analysed as per authors' instruction to determine the culture of the institute. Finally, qualitative data analysis techniques, particularly thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023) were applied to analyse the interviews of 7 teachers for a comprehensive view of school leadership and their opinions on school leadership style and performance.

The study abided by ethical considerations like participants' consent was sought prior to the study, the school and participants identity were kept anonymous, and all findings of the research have been shared with the participants for validation (Harvey, 2015).

Results

School General Information obtained through Document Analysis

The school, situated in the society area of Rajghar Lahore, is coded as Govt. X (Girls High School). Spanning across five Canals, this institution plays a crucial role in the community, particularly for the middle-class residents, many of whom are labourers unable to afford government fees for their children.

Acknowledging the financial constraints faced by some families, the school's staff members have proactively collected funds to support needy students. In order to assess the school's overall

performance, researchers reviewed various aspects, including logbooks, attendance registers, co-curricular activities, and noted school's achievements, such as the prestigious National Level Best Headmistress Award. Additionally, they scrutinized the five-year board results for classes 5th, 8th, 9th, and 10th. There was 95% attendance of school staff, and 89% students were attending the school.

The term "logbook" refers to the comments written by school evaluation authority who visit the institution, providing both positive and negative feedback on its performance. It was noted that the visitors have also acknowledged the school's excellence. For instance, the Headmistress's special request led to a visit by District Education Officer, who remarked, "They have had the honour to visit the X school. It was an opportunity to witness the great efforts of their team in elevating the education standards of the school. May Allah give them more strength and courage to achieve more success."

Another positive remark came from Administrative Judge Class-I, Court No: 64, Lahore, who stated, "They have personally visited the school and found the Nazra Quran period is functioning smoothly & efficiently."

Furthermore, during a visit with D.E.O. (EE) Lahore city and the Secretary District Headmaster Association Lahore city, the school received commendation for hosting a successful volleyball tournament. The D.E.O, EE Lahore City, expressed, "It is a healthy sign to see sports being followed due to the active supervision of the president of the school and they are all praise for her. Following were the results of past 5 years as per school record.

GOVT. X Girls High School, LAHORE

Result Year, 2017

Sr. No.	Classes	Total students admitted	Total appeared students	Total passed students	Total fail students	School result percentage	BISE result percentage
1	5	106	106	99	07	93%	80 %
2	8	119	119	118	01	99%	78%
3	9	153	153	122	31	80%	54%
4	10	145	145	119	26	82%	51%

Result Year, 2018

Sr. No.	Classes	Total students admitted	Total appeared students	Total passed students	Total fail students	School result percentage	BISE result percentage
1	5	116	108	97	11	97%	87.26%
2	8	126	119	105	14	88.23%	89.01%
3	9	122	122	86	36	70.49%	50.19%
4	10	146	146	135	11	92.47%	75.14%

Result Year, 2019

Sr. No.	Classes	Total students admitted	Total appeared students	Total passed students	Total fail students	School result percentage	BISE result percentage
1	5	116	111	110	01	99%	89.46%
2	8	150	144	135	09	93.75%	90.25%
3	9	152	150	114	36	76%	52%
4	10	116	113	89	24	78.76%	71.75%

Result Year, 2020

Sr. No.	Classes	Total students admitted	Total appeared students	Total passed students	Total fail students	School result percentage	BISE result percentage
1	8	146	137	133	04	97%	90.06%
2	9	174	174	Due to covid-19 promoted in next class			
3	10	150	142	127	15	89.44%	71.51%

The latest results of 9th and 10th class, 2021.

Result Year, 2021

Name of	No. of students Appeared	No. of Students Passed	Passed percentage
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Board	(Girls)	(Girls)	(Girls)
Overall			
9th	154	154	100%
10th	166	166	100%

Results of School Plant Checklist

The School Plant Checklist identified status of school location, administrative and service facilities, teachers’ work areas, classrooms, teachers’ resource centres, computer and science laboratories, Early Childhood Care, school and playgrounds, food service, health service, auditorium/seminar hall, prayer area, water facilities, prayer areas, security arrangements, toilets, and general cleanliness. The checklist contains 5 levels from being the facility totally absent = 0 to exceeding up to 100 points.

Table of School Plant Checklist

1.	School Location and site	Exceeds	Meets	Below	Nominal	Absent
A	Site is large enough to meet educational needs of the institute.		75%			
B	Site is easily accessible and conveniently located.		75%			
C	School site is on a plain ground, not rocky and hilly area to avoid student’s injury while playing.	100%				
D	Site is large enough for future expansion.		75%			
E	Location is removed from undesirable noise and traffic.		75%			
F	Site is suitable for special institutional needs, e.g., outdoors learning.		75%			
G	Sidewalks are adequate with designated crosswalks, curb cuts and correct slope.				25%	
H	Sufficient on site, solid surface parking for staff, visitors and handicapped.				25%	
I	Playground is well equipped and appropriate for the age level.		75%			
2.	Administrative and service facilities					
A	Administrative office area includes adequate reception/ waiting area.		75%			
B	Administrative personnel are provided, sufficient workspace and privacy.		75%			
3.	Teachers’ work areas					
A	Teachers’ work area is adequate.		75%			
B	Teachers’ work area provides access to communication technology.		75%			
4.	Classrooms					
A	Classrooms are vast in its space for students.	100%				
B	Classrooms are properly lit and ventilated.	100%				
C	Floors are level and clean	100%				
D	The furniture in classrooms, especially the desks are appropriate for learners.	100%				
E	Schools are ventilated for better output.	100%				
5.	Teachers Resources Centers					
A	There are teachers’ “resources centers, where teachers meet for discussion, investigations, workshop, short courses and conferences.		75%			

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B	Comfort rooms with lavatory for teachers.	75%
6.	Laboratories	75%
A	Computer laboratories are adequate in size.	75%
B	Adequate workstations are provided with at least 4 shared printers.	75%
7.	Early Childhood Care	
A	Early childhood care classrooms are adequate.	75%
B	Early childhood classes are located on ground floor.	75%
C	Early childhood classroom have sufficient equipment and materials (Sink, hot and cold water, shelving storage, wrap area, carpet area etc.)	75%
8.	Sports and playground	
A	Sports facility (outdoor) basketball, volleyball, and tennis court, track and field facilities and baseball fields.	100%
B	Playground's physical condition	100%
C	Playground equipment according to existing standards.	100%
9.	Food Service	
A	Food service area provides for receiving, storing, cooking, serving and dinning.	75%
B	Food service area is convenient to access and removal of wastes.	75%
C	Foodservice seating area accommodates students	75%
D	Equipment are adequate, (drinking water, number of delivery desks)	75%
E	Kitchen is adequate in size	25%
F	Food and non-food storage is adequate.	25%
G	Other equipment is available. (Locker, dressing room, lavatory, chairs, toilet etc.)	25%
10.	Health Service Units	
A	A health service unit is available with adequate size.	25%
B	Health service equipment and furnishings are adequate.	25%
11.	Auditorium	
A	School auditorium is of adequate size.	75%
B	The auditorium is located at a convenient place	75%
C	The auditorium is properly equipped (curtains, acoustical panels, film screens, controlled illumination, outlets etc.)	25%
D	Secondary school stage has adequate storage.	25%
12.	Vocational Hub	
A	Classrooms and laboratory space in each vocational area is adequate to meet curriculum.	75%
B	Required vocational equipment and materials are available in each	75%

	vocational area.	
C	Adequate storage is available in each vocational area.	75%
13.	Prayer Area	75%
A	Prayer area is adequate for teachers and students.	75%
B	Prayer area is ventilated.	75%
14.	Water facilities	
A	Filter water coolers are available for students in school.	75%
B	Water facilities are available for staff in the staff room.	75%
15.	Security Arrangements	
A	School entrance and exit security arrangements are tight.	75%
B	Sufficient staff is allocated for security purposes	75%
16.	Toilet	
A	Toilets are sufficient in number.	75%
B	Faculty toilets are separate.	75%
17.	Cleanliness	
A	Classroom floors are washed at least once a week with cleaning products.	75%
B	Children's desks are cleaned regularly	75%
C	Windows are open and ventilate well	75%
D	Toxic products are sealed, labeled, and kept in locked storage.	75%
E	Dustbins are kept at all accessible points.	75%

Interpretations of school facilities checklist

The observation of the school infrastructure indicated that the school's location met the standard up to 75%. The site was suitable enough for future expansion, situated away from noise and traffic, and capable of accommodating future needs. The school playgrounds were considered 100% safe for outdoor activities. However, the building's facilities for special students received a score of 25%. On the administrative front, the school boasted sufficient administrative and supportive staff, earning a score of 75%.

Teachers' work areas were available to facilitate their daily tasks and socialization, meeting needs up to 75%. Classrooms were plentiful, spacious, well-ventilated, and well-lit, achieving a perfect score of 100%. Nevertheless, teachers' resource centres met only 75% of the identified needs. Both computer and science laboratories were present in good condition with sufficient equipment and were utilized on a shared basis with 75% points.

The Early Childhood Care classroom was well-decorated and equipped, garnering a score of 75%. The school featured a sizable ground with diverse game equipment, earning a perfect score of 100%. However, food services were only available on a nominal basis, provided by a small canteen with readymade food materials. The limited food items prepared within the canteen scored only 25%.

Health services were scarce, with a small room containing a bed and necessary medicine. However, the absence of a doctor or paramedical staff resulted in a score of 25%. An auditorium/seminar hall with sufficient infrastructure was present, achieving a perfect score of 100%. A prayer area for both teachers and students was available and scored 75%. Water and sanitation facilities were sufficient in number, and a vocational hub with essential equipment received a score of 75%.

School toilets were adequate in number, and the overall cleanliness of the washrooms and the rest of the school was satisfactory, earning a score of 75%.

Results of Leadership Inventory

The leadership style inventory contained 10 case scenarios based on five leadership styles: Autocratic, Laissez faire, Democratic, Transformational and Paternalistic style. The leader decides one given

solution out of five for each scenario which decides about his/her leadership style on the basis of mode calculation (how many times she decides in a specific leadership style).

The headmistress of the selected school opted for the transformational leadership style 3/10 times, paternalistic leadership style 3/10 times, and democratic leadership style 4/10 times. She did not choose autocratic and laissez-faire styles in any case. Her performance on the LSI revealed that most of the time, she handled situations through the democratic leadership style because she had the tendency to involve all staff members in the decision-making process. Often, she used transformational and paternalistic leadership styles to fully support and encourage her staff. She remained immersed in school activities and showed a strong relationship and ownership of her staff and students.

Results of School Culture Scale

The School Culture Scale measures four types of culture given the pseudo names as type1, type 2, type 3 and type 4 which are Autocratic, Laissez faire, Democratic and Collegial actually. There are eighteen statements for a particular school culture according to a given criteria. Overall, 54 statements are there in the instrument. This scale was administered to all 36 teachers at the school. The analysis was made as per authors’ instructions given below:

Score limit criteria

The score distribution for the four (4) types of culture were from 1- 4 such as type-I (Autocratic = 1), type-II (Laissez faire = 2), type-III (Democratic = 3) and type-IV (Collegial = 4). The scoring scheme follows the given rule as:

Type I	Autocratic	Score limit (<2)
Type II	Laissez faire	Score limit (<2.5)
Type III	Democratic	Score limit (<3)
Type IV	Collegial	Score limit (<4)

School culture table

School-1	Autocratic	Laissez faire	Democratic	Collegial
Teachers Responses	0	0	14	22

Average of one questionnaire = Sum of all scores/18 (Number of ticked statements)

School Culture = Average of all questionnaires / Number of participants

$$= \frac{2.5+2.5+2.5+2.7+2.5+2.5+2.5+2.7+2.7+2.8+2.9+3.0+3.5+3.4+2.8+3.4+2.8+3.6+3.2+3.3+3.7+3.2+2.9+3+3.2+3.2+3.0+3.1+3.2+3.5+3.6+3.5+3.5+3.6+3.5+3.8}{36}$$

$$= 112.3/36$$

$$= 3.11 \text{ (Collegial Culture type IV)}$$

Type-III (Collegial Culture)

The cumulative score, derived from assessments by all 36 teachers, stands at 3.11, signifying the presence of a Collegial culture within the school. This culture is developed through a collective mission or vision contributed by all stakeholders, including staff, students, administration, and the community.

The ethos of the school fosters active staff participation in decision-making processes. Emphasis is placed on encouraging and entertaining the most suitable suggestions. Staff members are supported in their performance, and their achievements are celebrated and shared. The culture also encourages staff involvement in prayers and rituals, both collectively and convincingly.

Formal and informal meetings are encouraged, taking place in various settings such as staffrooms, the head's office, playground, and other locations. The culture supports and appreciates new experiments, whether undertaken individually or collectively. Staff members are assisted in resolving problems, both within and outside the institution.

Recognition is given to outstanding performance, with high expectations set for the staff. They are entrusted with the autonomy to take further steps at their discretion. Academic freedom is granted, allowing staff to introduce their own practices to enhance the classroom environment. Resources are produced and provided based on staff demands, whether from within or outside the institution.

Conversations within the school are characterized by informality, humour, politeness, naturalness, and spontaneity. The head and staff collaborate to provide full support and protection for problem-solving, acknowledging and rectifying any mistakes that may occur.

Staff members have the preference to continue working in the same school, even if they find better opportunities elsewhere. The communication within the school is marked by honesty, fairness, promptness, and involves necessary sharing and staff involvement.

Teachers and students alike are respected and rewarded for their individual potential, contributing to the overall collegial and inclusive culture of the school.

Results of Interviews

A semi-structured interview protocol was used to gain deeper understanding of the perceptions of schoolteachers. There were 7 participants who were purposively selected as key informants. A maximum variation sample was selected from the purposive sampling technique, and it included class in charge, coordinators, senior and junior teachers. These participants were given pseudo identity as P1, P2...P7. Their interviews were recorded and transcribed and then thematic analysis as per steps given by (Braun & Clarke, 2023) was conducted. The following are the themes presented under each question.

Table No: 1

Q1. Does your Headmistress solve your problems? If yes, then how?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Problems solved by Headmistress	Resolves Faculty’s personal problems	(1,2,4,5,6)
	Solves students’ problems.	
	Arranges scholarships or donations for needy students	(2,3,4)
	Facilitating personality (cooperative and passionate)	(4,5,6,7)
	HM frames committees for solving problems	(2,3,5)

The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the headmistress's ability to effectively address a range of issues involving staff, students, and parents. Respondent (R1) highlighted how she assisted staff members in managing student attendance after the pandemic, organizing events and exams to encourage regular attendance. Respondent (R2) praised her attentive and respectful approach to problem-solving, mentioning her suggestion to provide focused teaching for struggling students. Respondent (R4) commended her *“for resolving student-related issues and emphasizing courteous behavior towards students.”*

Respondent (R5) shared that the headmistress successfully addressed challenges related to COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy among parents, convincing them of its importance. Respondent (R6) noted that *“She is good at problem solving concerned with students and parents, citing the "Maar nhe pyaar" policy where she effectively handled a situation involving misbehaving students and their parents”*.

A few respondents identified financial concerns as a key issue for students. R2 explained that the headmistress formed a committee to address students' financial needs, offering scholarships and donations. Respondent (R3) praised the school's support for financially disadvantaged students and the provision of uniforms. Respondent (R4) highlighted efforts to ensure proper uniforms for students from low-income families.

Respondents who admired the headmistress's cooperative and passionate approach were enthusiastic about her impact. R4 described how she guided teachers in engaging larger classes effectively, while R5 appreciated her ability to discern false complaints from students. R6 highlighted her support in handling disruptive students by involving parents, and R7 *“acknowledged her talent for multitasking and guiding extracurricular activities”*.

A few respondents, including R2, R3, and R5, highlighted the headmistress's creation of committees for school improvement. R2 mentioned a conflict resolution committee, R3 discussed a committee for children's issues, and R5 lauded *“an inclusive problem-solving team that covered various grade levels.* Overall, the headmistress's facilitative personality, problem-solving skills, and commitment to student welfare earned positive feedback from the respondents.

Table No: 2

Q2. Does your Headmistress follow school’s policy?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Rules and regulations followed	Headmistress follows	(1,2,3,4,6,7)

by HOD	school policy strictly	
	School teachers make their own rules for the class	(1,3,4,5,7)
	best performance	
	Headmistress keeps the staff Mentally relax.	(3,4,5)
	Maintains Students quality performance	(3,4,5,6)

All respondents unanimously acknowledged the headmistress's unwavering commitment to adhering to rules and regulations. For instance, R1 commented, *"She diligently upholds the school's policies, leaving no room for compromise in matters of school functions and discipline. From punctuality to disciplinary measures and leave regulations, she ensures their strict implementation and enforces them among the staff wholeheartedly."* R2 noted her observation that teachers were expected to conduct classes promptly upon arrival, without wasting time, underlining the importance of effective teaching.

R3 appreciated the headmistress's dedication to maintaining strict school timings, emphasizing that time spent within school premises should be devoted to quality education. This was particularly evident during the pandemic, when the headmistress led a COVID-19 team, ensuring health protocols were followed, including temperature checks, and prompt action was taken if a student showed signs of fever.

Certain respondents also took the initiative in establishing their own rules to enhance class and school performance. R1, a class in-charge teacher and management committee member, outlined how she managed her class and supported students through self-established rules, maintaining coordination with their respective subject teachers. R3 shared her *"role in fostering a positive school culture by monitoring student behavior and performance"*. R4 set specific rules for her class, controlling restroom visits and class exits to maintain discipline.

Recognizing the diverse learning needs of students, R5 described their leader's efforts to cater to various learning paces and implement effective teaching strategies to ensure syllabus coverage. R7 extended her impact beyond academics, conducting activities on gender-based awareness and empowerment.

Many respondents felt the headmistress fostered a relaxed environment for staff and students alike. R3 praised her ability to understand and alleviate staff concerns, creating an atmosphere conducive to both teaching and learning. R4 shared her guidance in managing dual roles as a teacher and PhD scholar, while R5 appreciated the positive reinforcement and mental relief gained from her feedback and encouragement during times of success.

The headmistress's emphasis on maintaining quality work and providing constructive feedback earned recognition. R3 pointed out that her commitment to adhering to school timings translated into delivering quality education. R4 highlighted her provision of teacher training, facilitated by subject experts, to enhance student learning. R5 described *"external evaluations and the headmistress's vigilant monitoring of syllabus coverage and adherence to educational calendars, which ensured a smooth educational environment"*.

The headmistress's holistic approach extended to empowering students with essential life skills. R6 noted her initiatives in promoting female rights, hygiene awareness, gardening, and first aid training, leading to positive changes in the school community. Such efforts, combined with positive feedback and awards, motivated teachers to deliver quality results.

In sum, respondents uniformly appreciated the headmistress's dedication to rules and regulations, her proactive approach to problem-solving, and her contribution to creating a nurturing and effective educational environment.

Table No: 3

Q3. Does your Headmistress manage the available physical resources for the facilitation of you and your students?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents	
Headmistress manages the available physical resources.	HM facilitation for resources	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7)	Physical
	Improvement of educational	(1,4,7)	results
	Generates funds for needy	(2,3,5,6,7)	students

All participants acknowledged the effective management of available physical resources by their headmistress to facilitate interactions between staff and students. No complaints were lodged against her. R1's perspective highlighted the comprehensive facilities provided in classrooms, including science practical kits, seating, and drinking water coolers for both students and staff. R2 and R5 noted her orchestration of prize distribution events, where she oversaw arrangements such as hall decorations, audio systems, shields, and certificates. Often, she took on these responsibilities herself, fostering encouragement among students even without government aid. R3 contributed that audio-visual aids were employed during class, enhancing teaching through practical demonstrations. The headmistress was devoted to supporting students and teachers.

R5 and R6 emphasized the headmistress's resourcefulness within the school's budget. Instances like replacing a malfunctioning assembly microphone or repairing furniture demonstrated her commitment. R1 further remarked that when essential items were needed for educational enhancement, the headmistress provided them, like materials for tests, competitions, and other activities. She invested her own time as well. R4 recounted *“the headmistress's responsiveness to requests for classroom improvements, providing resources like tables to create a better learning environment. Early childhood classes were also decorated to boost student engagement and academic performance.”*

R7 acknowledged the headmistress's practice of recognizing and rewarding teachers' efforts with appreciation letters. This approach motivated teachers to enhance student academic outcomes. Financial constraints emerged as a key challenge, with R2 describing student financial issues. The headmistress established a committee involving staff and students to address these needs, securing scholarships, donations, and uniform provisions. R3 highlighted *“the school supports for financially challenged students, ensuring a conducive learning environment. Uniform-related problems were addressed,”* and R5 recalled instances where the school supplied uniforms, sweaters, shoes, and socks to ensure uniformity among students.

R6 highlighted efforts to aid students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds through fundraising, with contributions from the headmistress and staff. R7 also mentioned personal efforts of HM to assist needy students through community involvement.

All of the teachers were in consensus that the headmistress skilfully managed resources to foster a conducive learning environment, while financial difficulties were addressed through collaborative initiatives and donations, ensuring all students received a quality education.

Table No: 4

Q4. What strategy is used by your Headmistress to retain students?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Facilitation of available physical resources for students and staff	High retention of students	(1,2,4,5,6,7)
	High reputation of the school	(1,2,4,5,7)
	School environment parallel to private schools	(1,5,6,7)
	School's achievements	(2,4,7)

The consensus among the majority teachers was that their school's retention rate was commendable. R1 affirmed, *“Alhamdulillah, our school's enrolment and retention targets are consistently excellent. We've never been concerned about fluctuating student numbers, as our school's strong reputation naturally influences people's decisions.”* R2 recognized a core strategy *“when the quality of education is high, students gravitate towards admission on their own. The recent increase in admissions due to improved results has proved this fact. This supports my belief that any institution aiming for a positive reputation must maintain strong results and foster healthy relationships with parents and students, ensuring a sustained enrolment.”*

R3 appreciated the nurturing environment provided by her government school, at par to private institutions. The distinct uniform of blue shirts and white trousers, intended to match prestigious schools like Garrison, instilled a sense of identity among their students. R4 emphasized the significance of strong student-teacher relationships in maintaining attendance. Regular meetings highlighted the need to fortify these bonds and refine teaching methods to retain students. HM's concern in addressing student and teacher concerns earnestly contributed to increased enrolment.

R5 recounted how teachers were entrusted with admission duties, leading to successful enrolment campaigns. Home visits, parental engagement, and results banners enhanced the school's

popularity. R6 highlighted collaboration with school council members, which, combined with the persuasive efforts of teachers and HM, led to a thriving student body.

R7 told that the school was consistently growing enrolment, acknowledging occasional departures due to student relocations. Most of the participants attributed good retention of students to the school's positive reputation. R1 emphasized the role of reputation in attracting students and noted the involvement of the school council in maintaining enrolment. R2 mentioned the importance of results and relationships in building a reputable institution. R4 credited HM's effective problem-solving for the school's positive reputation and increased enrolment. R5 linked the school's growing popularity to good results and consistent enrolment growth. R7 asserted that their school consistently maintained high enrolment rates.

Participants also emphasized similarities between their school environment and private institutions. R1 mentioned that in her school, teachers engage students through role-playing activities instead of relying on rote learning and creating dynamic classrooms. R5 shared that the school aspires to provide education comparable to private schools like Garrison, instilling confidence in the students. R6 praised the teachers' dedication and the well-maintained school environment, which reminded them of private institutions in terms of achievements.

R2 summarized, *"Our school's achievements are a combination of reputation, high enrolment, good results, and relationships with stakeholders"*. R4 reported HM's role in resolving student issues as a significant achievement. R6 emphasized collaboration's impact on student enrolment and teacher attention. R7 commended the staff's versatility and efficient multitasking, mentioning a science teacher's guidance in the Girl Guide program. In conclusion, the collective efforts of the staff, led by the headmistress, have fostered an environment of academic excellence, positive reputation, and overall growth in their school.

Table No: 5

Q5. Does your headmistress maintain students' result in a better position?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
The Headmistress maintains students' result.	Consistent high results	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7)
	HM monitoring	(1,4,6,7)
	Regular tests sessions	(1,3)
	Effective Coordination	(1,3,4,7)
	Collective effort	(4,5,7)

The consensus among most participants was that the headmistress played a pivotal role in achieving outstanding academic results through collective efforts. R1 shared, *"Through collective effort and under the guidance of our headmistress, our results have consistently been 100%, a testament to her discipline and efficient management. Her rules and regulations set the foundation for our success."* R2 commended her for maintaining excellent student results, achieving consistent top grades and displaying results prominently.

R3 observed a well-managed environment upon joining, attributing the upward trend in student percentages to her diligent management. The headmistress even organized special classes to enhance learning. R4 not only acknowledged her maintenance of good results but also noted how she actively improved them by assessing teaching methods and encouraging thorough subject knowledge.

R5 mentioned the headmistress's proactive approach, involving block in-charges to ensure quality education without compromising co-curricular activities. Students and teachers were recognized with prizes and displayed on results banners.

R7 reiterated that *"our school consistently achieved 100% results, crediting the headmistress's efficiency, discipline, and governance"*.

Respondents acknowledged her support and constraints as well. R1 emphasized the reciprocal responsibility in carrying out tasks in line with her guidance. R4 shared her daily rounds of ninth-grade classes, urging teachers to be well-prepared for questions and fostering student awareness. R6 reported of maintaining a balance between co-curricular activities and studies.

Regarding HM's coordination skills, R1 praised her problem-solving abilities and efficient coordination of plans with staff. R3 highlighted her all-encompassing management and efficient coordination. R4 acknowledged her adeptness in persuading people to cooperate in tasks, ensuring well-planned coordination. R7 emphasized her self-reliance in coordinating tasks satisfactorily.

Multiple respondents praised her hands-on approach in maintaining and enhancing academic excellence. R4 elaborated on her classroom observations and questioning techniques to assess

teachers' mastery of subject matter, which positively impacted results. R5 emphasized that “*she has been personally involved in monitoring students' performance and practices*”. R7 noted her consistent monitoring and preparedness in the classroom, fostering student and teacher growth.

In essence, the headmistress's guidance, coordination, and dedication played a pivotal role in achieving and surpassing academic excellence, ensuring effective collaboration, and promoting holistic development.

Table No: 6

Q6. What type of relationship do you have with your headmistress? Explain?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Headmistress relation with her staff	Motherly figure	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7)
	Guide and facilitator	(1,2,3,4,5,6)
	Nurturing and supporting	(2,3,7)
	Relationship of trust	(2)

The majority of respondents expressed that the headmistress had a nurturing and supportive relationship with them, often likening her to a motherly figure. They felt she cared for their personal and professional well-being. R1 shared that the headmistress treated her like a daughter and supported her in various aspects of life. Respondent 2 highlighted how the headmistress's guidance was akin to that of a mother, offering leadership advice and being accessible for problem-solving. Others, like Respondent 3 and 4, admired her understanding and approachability, mentioning how she was both polite and strict when needed.

In addition to being a maternal figure, the headmistress was seen as a valuable guide and facilitator. R1 mentioned how she assisted with managing the challenges of being a PhD scholar while teaching. Respondent 2 noted that she imparted leadership skills and earned a leadership certificate. The headmistress's event organizing skills were also lauded, particularly her successful celebrations of occasions like Iqbal Day and Independence Day (14th August). Respondents appreciated her commitment to academic excellence, as evident from student achievements and awards ceremonies.

A few respondents, such as Respondent 5, found the headmistress's decision-making regarding holidays and leaves integral to maintaining school performance. Respondent 6 highlighted her adept handling of holiday requests during COVID-19, understanding the need for balance between staff well-being and school functioning.

Furthermore, the headmistress actively engaged staff in school functions. Respondent 2 recalled her formation of a committee to organize an event, assigning tasks to teachers, and providing guidance. Respondent 7 appreciated the headmistress's efforts to create a positive work environment, occasionally arranging tea parties and surprise events for staff refreshment.

In consensus, the headmistress was regarded as a compassionate and effective leader who nurtured a strong sense of community and ensured the smooth functioning of the school.

Table No: 7

Q7. How does headmistress resolve conflicts in the school?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Headmistress resolves conflicts among Staff and students	Headmistress resolve Conflicts	(1,3,4,5,6,7)
	Sympathetic behaviour For staff	(1,2,5)
	Democratic personality	(1,5)

Many respondents agreed that their headmistress effectively resolved conflicts between staff and students. For example, R1 emphasized her skill in conflict resolution as “*she definitely addressed our conflicts. Some students were prone to being disruptive and often visited the head office to complain. The headmistress consistently displayed a fair approach, avoiding unilateral decisions. She treated everyone with respect and upheld their dignity. Her decision-making process was democratic, involving parents, teachers, and class in-charges. She successfully resolved various issues. For instance, there was a situation where I had a student in my class who had shifted to Mughalpura. I wanted her to attend class regularly, so I discussed with her parents. They faced challenges due to the distance from the school. The headmistress intervened by discussing the matter with the parents and ultimately deciding that the student needed to attend class at least five days a week given he was in the 5th grade. This resolution was accepted due to the headmistress's seniority and credibility. Such conflicts were rare, but she consistently aided in finding solutions.*”

R3 also shared that the headmistress addressed all problems and maintained a regular presence in classrooms. She treated children well and instilled ethical values in them. In cases of student misconduct towards teachers, she guided students to respect their teachers, emphasizing the importance of becoming good and successful individuals. She even advised sports-oriented students to balance their studies and sports.

R4 mentioned that *“conflicts with students were generally rare. However, when they did arise, the headmistress listened carefully and resolved them. In some instances, conflicts occurred between students and teachers, and the headmistress personally intervened, without embarrassing the teachers involved”*.

R5 highlighted the headmistress's unwavering support for teachers in school matters. Regardless of the situation, whether it was a teacher-student issue or a complaint against a teacher, she backed the teachers completely. She always emphasized the students' accountability and encouraged parents to acknowledge their children's mistakes.

Reflecting on the headmistress's early days at the school, during the admissions process for the 9th grade science class, some students who hadn't passed the test but desired to study science were initially denied. However, one student complained to higher authorities about books availability, using a false claim of mistreatment. The headmistress adeptly handled the situation by investigating and offering medical examination, which revealed the falsehood. This instance showcased her problem-solving skills.

R6 shared that the headmistress consistently managed conflicts, especially those related to student behaviour and attendance. Her approach varied, sometimes stern and at other times gentle. She aimed to help students understand the efforts teachers put in.

R7 also reported the headmistress's conflict resolution abilities. Personal conflicts with students were rare, and she assigned responsibilities to teachers for the safety of students even after school hours.

Several respondents noted the headmistress's sympathetic behaviour towards staff. R1 mentioned her conflict resolution skills, emphasizing her democratic decision-making process involving all stakeholders. R2 appreciated her handling of staff situations, noting she shielded staff from criticism by parents. R5 admired her sympathetic demeanour, describing how she provided guidance rather than using harsh words.

Most of the teachers observed the headmistress's preference for democratic leadership and her commitment to fair and effective conflict resolution.

Table No: 8

Q8. What are the achievements of your school and how did your headmistress manage to achieve them?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
Our school achievements	High results	(1,2,4,5,6,7)
	Students positions in co-curricular activities	(1,2,4,5,6,7)
	Girl guide facilitation for students	(2,4,5,6)
	Award of best administrator	(3,4,5)

Most respondents acknowledged several achievements of their school. For instance, R1 highlighted the annual display of results, which are shared with the community. R2 emphasized the *“students' consistent high performance in exam”*. R4 also reported impressive results and student performance. R5 affirmed that maintaining high results is paramount, and the headmistress takes actions based on result performance. R6 proudly cited perfect results in grades 8, 9, and 10. R7 emphasized the school's competitive spirit and achievements, highlighting that despite resource limitations, the school excels.

Respondents also mentioned students' successes in co-curricular activities. R1 pointed out the presence of both curricular and co-curricular activities, particularly sports, where the school had won numerous trophies. R2 mentioned achievements in sports, poetry mushaira, and Naat competitions, crediting the headmistress's personal guidance. R4 similarly commended the school's accomplishments in sports and extracurricular events. R5 discussed the school's success in district-level sports despite challenges, emphasizing teamwork and the headmistress's support. R6 cited district-level sports participation and monthly literary events.

A few respondents praised the establishment of the girl guides program. R1 and R4 highlighted the girl guides' role in enforcing school rules, engaging in various activities like breast cancer awareness, and being among a selected group of schools to offer these opportunities. R5 indicated the girl guides' potential for international recognition.

Some respondents commended the headmistress's administrative skills. R3 noted her recent award as the best administrator and her effective management, including SOP adherence during the COVID-19 pandemic. R4 praised her hands-on guidance in various school activities and the establishment of the girl guides program. R5 expressed that *“As a good administrator she ensures effective management”*.

The respondents generally acknowledged the school's achievements, successful co-curricular involvement, and the headmistress's effective administration.

Table No: 9

Q9. Does your headmistress plan a change in the school? If yes, what strategy does she use?

Main Themes	Sub Themes	Respondents
HM's strategy for change	Teamwork	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7)
	Effective Communication	(1,2,3,4,5,6)
	Including all stakeholders	(5,6)
	Structured approach	(4)
	Delegation and democracy	(2,3,4)

Most of respondents reported that the headmistress employed a change strategy that heavily relied on teamwork. For instance, R1 explained that *“whenever the headmistress identified a need for improvement, she took steps to initiate change. She started by discussing her thoughts and then formed a team to address the issue. This team often included section and block in-charges. This collaborative effort aimed to enhance the abilities and strategies of 5 to 10 staff members. Block in-charges conveyed opinions, facilitating effective communication”*.

R2 shared a similar sentiment, detailing how the headmistress engaged school council members, senior teachers, and block heads to implement changes such as using distinct sash colors to differentiate class sections. These changes were well-received due to the inclusion of stakeholders' perspectives.

R3 emphasized the headmistress's structured approach to change. She involved block heads and second-in-charges, provided training, and established task checklists. Different roles, such as discipline in-charges and COVID-19 in-charges, were assigned based on individual strengths and experiences.

R4 highlighted the headmistress's belief in teamwork and her preference for addressing challenges collectively. This approach fostered a strong sense of cooperation among teachers. The headmistress's strategy included appointing section and sub in-charges to ensure effective communication and problem resolution.

R5 described how the headmistress organized meetings to distribute tasks among teachers, often forming committees and appointing in-charges. This allowed for swift implementation of changes, as seen with the immediate adoption of Quran recitation and uniform adjustments. The headmistress's collaborative approach facilitated effective change management.

R6 cited an example *“the headmistress introduced changes to the school uniform code by assigning different coloured sashes to different class grades. This innovation improved student identification and showcased the headmistress's commitment to positive change. Additionally, the headmistress's connections with NGOs led to enhanced facilities and aid for the school”*.

Cumulatively, the respondents highlighted the headmistress's preference for a democratic leadership style when implementing changes. This approach involved collaborative discussions, the formation of teams or committees, and the engagement of various stakeholders. These efforts resulted in positive transformations within the school environment.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study establishes the positive impact of leadership style on school improvement as per previous findings (Abowitz, et al., 2013; Feu Gelis, et al., 2023). Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the school culture (Cardona, et al., 2023), with empirical evidence indicating that school facilities contribute to some extent, though they are not the sole determinants of school performance. The dominant factor identified is the Head's leadership style (Wiyono, et al., 2023) which ranges from democratic to collegial. This leadership style significantly influences various aspects of the school,

including results, discipline, culture, student-teacher performance, relationships, curricular and co-curricular activities, and communication with the community.

All stakeholders, including students, teachers, and higher authorities, expressed satisfaction with the headmistress's leadership style and the overall school performance as per findings of (Wang, et al., 2016; Wang, 2018; Day, et al., 2020). The school is characterized by an environment where everyone is respected but also encouraged to adhere to discipline. Changes within the school are well-informed and supported, with all stakeholders actively involved. The study reveals a deep involvement of the leader in every school activity, including the head's presence in classrooms and community meetings.

The findings of this study align with previous research (Maqbool, et al. 2023), supporting the assertion that leadership style significantly influences a school's performance.

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